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News

Brazil to fortify government email system following NSA snooping revelations

The country's Federal Data Processing Service has been tasked with the job

By Lucian Constantin, IDG News Service
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IDG News Service - The Brazilian Federal Data Processing Service, known as Serpro, will build a secure email system for Brazil's federal government following media reports that foreign intelligence agencies intercepted electronic communications in the country.

Via several Twitter posts on Sunday, Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff said that creating a secure email system for the federal government is the first step to increase the privacy and inviolability of official messages. Messages require increased security to prevent possible espionage, she said.

Brazilian citizens and government officials, as well as Petrobras, Brazil's national oil company, have been the targets of electronic spying by the NSA and other intelligence agencies, according to media reports based on documents leaked by former U.S. National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden.

Rousseff, whose communications have also reportedly been targeted, condemned NSA's spying as a breach of international law in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly last month. In protest, she also cancelled a planned visit to Washington.

More recently, Brazilian TV network Globo reported, based on documents leaked by Snowden, that Canada's Communications Security Establishment (CSE) collected metadata for phone calls and emails to and from Brazil's Ministry of Mines and Energy.

Last week, the leaders of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the Internet Architecture Board (IAB), the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the

Internet Society and five regional Internet address registries, called for the globalization of ICANN and IANA functions following a meeting in Montevideo, Uruguay.

ICANN is a nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles, California that oversees the Internet domain name space and IP address allocation. However, ICANN's accountability to the U.S. government has drawn criticism from many parties for a long time, including from the European Commission.

Pres. Rousseff announced last week that Brazil will host an international meeting with governments, businesses, NGOs, civil society and academia in April 2014 on the topic of Internet governance following a meeting she had with Fadi Chehade, the CEO of ICANN.

The Brazilian government is also looking into laying a new underwater fiber optic cable directly to Europe in order to avoid routing the country's Internet connections through the U.S. Legislation that would force U.S. online services providers like Facebook and Google to only host information on Brazilian citizens in Brazilian data centers is also being considered.

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